

May 2, 2002

Mr. Steve Beachy, Director
College Station Parks & Recreation Department
1000 Krenak Tap Road
College Station, TX 77840

Dear Mr. Beachy,

I am writing this on behalf of the South Knoll Elementary School PTO. We are currently addressing the need for a running track to be located on our campus. The physical education teachers came to us with a proposal for a 1/5 mile cement based track with a rubberized surface.

The PTO Board unanimously voted to approve \$10,000 towards the track and agreed to assist in securing outside funding to complete the project. At this time we have met with Steve Johnson, Superintendent of CSISD and Mike Ball, Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Business Services at CSISD and they have agreed to fund the cement portion of the track. The PTO promoted the track with a Family Fun Run/Walk as a kick off to the annual fundraiser, "Spring Fling" on April 13th. Profits from donations and T-shirt sales were earmarked for the track fund.

We are requesting that the city consider partnering with the school and the PTO with their financial assistance in this project. We see this as an opportunity to demonstrate the strong connection between schools, parks, and the recreational and fitness opportunities they both provide in our community.

We would like to base our request for funding from the College Station Parks & Recreation Department on the precedent set by many school/park partnerships evident throughout our community.

-Existing partnerships between our schools and community parks

Examples: A&M Consolidated Middle School Tennis Courts and Lighting/Electricity, Electricity for lighting of high school tennis courts provided by the city, College Station Middle School Natatorium.

-Where school and parkland are adjacent to one another and a partnership exists:

Examples: Jack and Dorothy Miller Park at Rock Prairie Elementary, Pebble Creek Elementary.

-Where the School Supports Community Recreation

Example: High school and middle school running tracks and tennis courts, Elementary school playgrounds for play, soccer, baseball, football and softball practices, Kids Club programs, swimming lessons, recreational swim, and water exercise classes in the Natatorium.

-Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

Under Strategic Goal 2 within this plan it states:

General Objective 2.2 College Station should continue to develop and maintain parks and recreation areas jointly with other public agencies including Texas A&M University, College Station Independent School District and Brazos County.

Specific Goal #12 Investigate the feasibility of cooperative ventures with the College Station Independent School District.

South Knoll Elementary is the only elementary school in CSISD that does not have a track. Recent research shows that students at Rock Prairie Elementary have significantly higher scores on cardiovascular fitness tests (timed, mile run) compared to students at South Knoll. Rock Prairie has been able to implement a successful running program with the use of the track that is jointly supported by the city and the school. At a time when childhood obesity is at an all-time high and continues to rise, Type II diabetes is increasing at alarming rates in children, and physical activity has decreased among children, we feel it especially critical that we provide a safe venue for children and families to engage in physical activity.

We believe the surrounding neighborhood would benefit from the track since at this time there is no park in the area that provides a running/walking track. Gabbard Park's trail has not been maintained.

Presently, the bid for rubberizing the track is \$21,648.00. The PTO has approved approximately \$11,212.00. We are asking the Parks and Recreation Department to consider contributing \$8,000 to complete the track project. CSISD will fund the cement portion of the track at approximately \$23,500. The PTO is very excited to be able to contribute this amount of money to the track project. South Knoll serves a significant number of families that have many socioeconomic challenges, so the fact that we have the money to do this from our fundraising efforts, gives us a great deal of pride in our school and the families that help to support it.

This request presents another opportunity for our schools and Parks & Recreation Department to combine resources and services to benefit children and the community. We look forward to hearing from you and would welcome the opportunity to schedule a meeting with you to continue this discussion.

Sincerely,

Debra McCandless Shafer
PTO Board Member
696-6379 (H) 458-2724 (W)

cc: Dr. John Nichols, Parks Board Chairman
Mr. Ron Silvia, Mayor College Station